

10 Things Parents Can Do For a Child Who Has ADHD- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

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1. Consider purchasing Active Parenting of Teens (for teens) or Active Parenting Today (for 2-12 year olds) by Michael Popkin 1-800-825-0060. Read it thoroughly and ask yourself “How will I use these principles with my child?” Then practice them one by one. These are great books to give some clear ideas for parents. Possibly buy the Parent’s Guide To Attention Deficit Disorder by McCarney and Bauer 1-800-542-1673. This is a great book about how to help a child with specific behavior problems.

2. Whenever possible, do not force or demand good behavior. Give two or three choices, with each one being acceptable to you. Let the child feel powerful by making choices.

3. When the child has done something inappropriate, do **NOT** ask, “Why did you do that?” This only teaches a child to lie because he knows that whatever his answer is, he will be told that it wasn’t a good reason to do what he did. Instead, ask “Can you see how this is a problem for you (or for someone)”

4. Read the PINC document # RB 08 “Five Rules for a Happy Relationship.” Again, ask yourself, “How will I use these principles with my child?” Again, practice, practice, and practice. Parents don’t have to be perfect at this, but no changes will take place except increased frustration for everyone if you don’t think about and practice these ideas.

5. Do not focus on the past, even if the past is only 5 seconds ago. Focus on what you want him to do now or in the near future. The more you say, “You just did this!” “Stop it!” will cause him to be defensive, angry, and eventually become defiant. Ask for what you want in a kind way. “Please” is a magical word. It won’t change his behavior immediately but it will make important improvement, even if it is slow.

6. Don’t make your child admit he was wrong. The more that we demand or force a child to do anything, even if it is right, the more they are likely to rebel and become defiant. Most times we lose if we use force, even if it is for good things.

7. Make agreements, sometimes. This doesn’t mean we pay them for everything they do, but “to help him with what he wants if he helps you with what you want”, is helpful at times. This can be carried too far and some children may end up only doing things if they get something out of it. But use agreements when it seems appropriate.

8. Shame is an emotion that destroys self-confidence and self-esteem. The more we shame a child, the more we destroy him. Find ways to talk with him without shaming him. As you talk with him, ask yourself if your comments will make him feel ashamed. If so, stop. It doesn’t matter what he did or how we may justify what we are saying. We are destroying him if we make him feel ashamed.

9. Praise him. Praise him. Praise him. The emotional impact of a reprimand is much stronger than praise. We have to praise four to five times just to be even with one reprimand. So, if you catch yourself reprimanding your child, it would be wise to praise him four or five times before you reprimand him again.

10. **Don’t give up.** It is so hard to continually deal with difficult behavior. Talk with other parents. Take a parenting class. Take a break from your child at times. Then go back and love him. Have fun with him. Listen to him. Understand him. Talk with him. Anyone can parent a responsible, calm child. If you happen to have a loud, restless, impulsive child who is frequently in trouble, take a few deep breathes and go love him sincerely, with true friendship. This will do more good for him and you in the long run than yelling or reprimanding.